
#345 MUSEUM MASON MONTEREY PADDLE-ARM CHAIR: UPDATE #3, REPAIR + REUPHOLSTERY



This is the third of the informal updates for Paddle-arm #345, which is assigned to the museum. Following from update #2, the finish was preserved and ready for repair + reupholstery. We will stay away from technical jargon and hope you all enjoy seeing what is happening with the Monterey pieces entrusted to us. The narrative is not in order, and not all our steps are covered.

Best, Kate and Mitchell Powell.



Overall it is noted that Mason Bros. Upholstery was a slap-dash affair with many inconsistencies. The upholstery cuts were jagged and uneven, cutting close to the margin in one area, and with 3-inches of hem in another. This worked to our advantage in the first stage of reupholstery, which was to clean the original upholstery. One of the edges had a large piece of material 6-inches long and 1 1/2-inches wide, and this was snipped to use as a test piece.

The nubby woven material tested well, but there was a muslin backing which was originally glued to the back for stability, and this glue did not test well with even the mildest of cleansers. The glue, tended to become sticky and embed itself into the fabric, becoming stiff, no matter how long we soaked the test pieces nor the number of rinses. All cleansers reactivated the glue in some manner.



Our test in water by itself, however, did not activate the glue but allowed it to fall out of the material, and little color was lost, shown above. We finally chose to wet wash the upholstery (with one exception) in deionized water.

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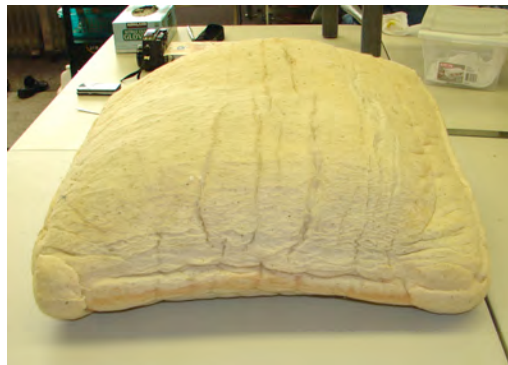
While the tests were running, Mitchell excavated the cushion, right. The original spring cushion was in poor condition for use but adequate for museum display, so all internals could be saved.

The cushion was embedded with dirt, shown center left, and was carefully but thoroughly vacuumed under low suction with a HEPA filter.

Once cleaned, Mitchell rearranged the internals of the original cushion, and added a roll of cotton to give the cushion the loft it would have had originally, shown center right.



The cushion ready for the cleaned show cover, below.



We also had to prepare the upholstery for cleaning. The large weave and raw edges were frayed, and had to be restored and secured before cleaning was possible. Due to the nature of the ragged edges and the small selvage available in several cases, each edge had to be hand-stitched or machine overcast.

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Shown top left and right, the cushion show cover edges Mitchell cut were hand-stitched, and the internal hems were overcast, center top left.

The upholstery was vacuumed, removing the first layer of dirt, center top right.

The cushion was soaked multiple times, shown center bottom left, and rinsed each time until the water came clean of dirt. Mitchell built a form to block the cushion, and the cushion was blocked around the form, center bottom right.

When the upholstery was thoroughly dry, the conserved cushion was inserted into the clean show over, bottom right and next page top left.



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The cushion was hand-stitched, top right, and ready for the chair.

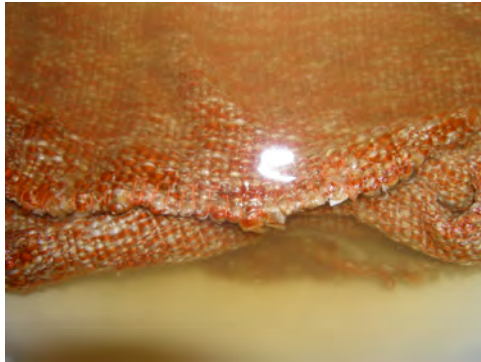
The inside back and outside back were quite frayed, shown right. Hand-stitching was necessary in most cases, shown center bottom left, and reweaving was done to restore edges in some cases, shown center bottom right. Twill tape was used to act as a bandage to hold holes created by tacks, shown bottom left. Finished edge, bottom right.



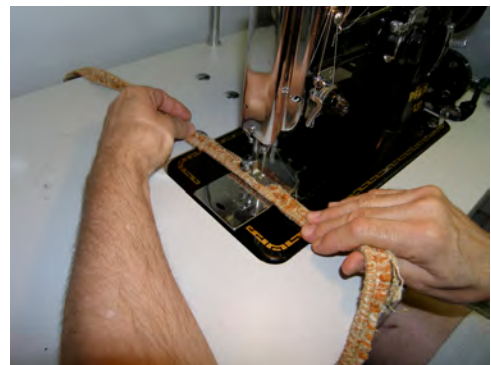
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Outside back before cleaning, above. The round areas are rust spots from the decorative nails.



Outside back during wet cleaning, center top left. When the water ran clear of dirt, the outside back was blotted in a clean towel and blocked and pinned to dry on a board, center top right and center bottom left. When dry, the piece was cleaned of dirt, shown center bottom right. The darker color around the edges is the original color before bleaching from sunlight. The same procedure was done for the inside back as well.



The welt cord edges were overcast with a zig-zag stitch to stop the unraveling, shown bottom, and it, too was cleaned as described above.

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Mitchell overcast the seat deck cover in order to reupholster the piece, shown top left and right.

The seat deck cover was unable to be wet cleaned due to the original labels, which would be destroyed with water.

Kate spot cleaned the front edge of the piece.

The original seat deck scrim is quite beautiful, saffron and blue, shown center top right, and Mitchell needed to preserve it, as it was fraying. He used a hemp linen underneath the entire seat deck, and stitched the frayed edges into place, center bottom right.

The Seat Deck was ready for reupholstery, bottom left.

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*The frame needed the deck filler rails reinstalled, above.
For information and a comparison on the problems with the original manner in which the frame was built,
see a comparison on the Paddle-arm that was destined for reuse.*



The original Jute webbing was reinstalled on both the seat deck, center left, and also on the seat seat deck inside back, center right. The original burlap was reinstalled on the seat deck, bottom left, and the original cotton topper placed on top of the burlap, bottom right. Note: staples were used instead of tacks to minimize the damage to the wood.



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The original inside back burlap topper was reinstalled, top left.

The welt cord was stapled around the perimeter, top right.

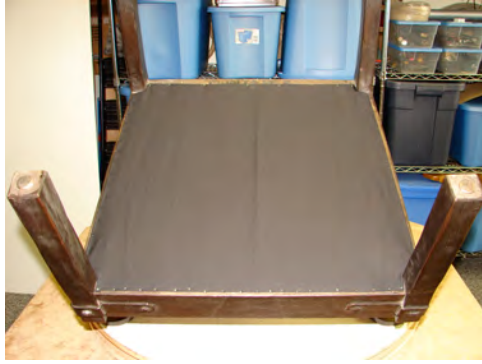
The cleaned and conserved inside back cotton pad was reinstalled, center left.

Finally, the cleaned and conserved original inside back show cover was reupholstered, using new decorative nails, as the original nails could not be reused.

A similar build-up was performed on the outside back, shown below.



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A new dustcover was installed with tacks, shown above, and the original was cleaned and returned to the NPS.

The Paddle-arm Chair is ready for display in the Oregon Caves Museum, below.

